COCHIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.

(Legislative Session of Vrischigam 1101)

Thursday, the 10th of December 1925.

The fourth meeting of the Vrischigam Session was held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, Ernakulam, at 11-30 a. m. on the 25th of Vrischigam 1101, corresponding to the 10th of December 1925. Besides those absent on Wednesday, Messrs. A. Eachara Menon and S. S. Koder also were absent. The Diwan presided. The Proceedings commenced at 11-30 a. m. with the answering of questions.

President's introductory remarks about Questions and Answers.

President.—Before we commence the proceedings of this day with Questions and Answers, I have to make a few observations in connection with this interesting item of business. Yesterday, we spent some time over the question as to who are all entitled to put supplementary questions and who are all entitled, on the Government side, to take part in the answering of such questions. So far as the putting of supplementary questions is concerned, the matter is beyond doubt, namely, he alone has a right to put supplementary questions who has asked the question. The rule on the point is clear, and I had occasion to refer to that on a previous day when we were discussing the question as to whether more than one supplementary question can be put, and Dr. A. G. Menon rightly suggested that the matter is one for amending the rule rather than for any interpretation of the rule.

Another point that I wish to emphasise in regard to the questions and answers is this:—It is not to be viewed as a sort of cross-examination of the Government official. (*Hear, hear.*) From what I have said yesterday, the learned Member for Nellayi must have understood what I was aiming at. The cross-examination of a witness really means that the witness in his examination-in-chief has not spoken the truth, and therefore, by a series of questions the party examining wants to make out whether the witness has really spoken the truth. Questions are put

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by the members; those questions are considered by the Government, the responsible Heads of Departments being asked to supply materials for answering them. Those materials, on their being furnished by the Heads of Departments, are considered by the Government, and the Government prepares the answer. And that being the true situation, the Government wants one of its officers to be the mouth-piece for answering the question. And I think there is a good deal of truth and force in what the Diwan Peishkar said yesterday that the Government officer in the know of things—whoever he is—must be allowed the right of answering the supplementary questions. Then the question turns only upon what has been stated in the Questions and Answers paper. As against questions put by a certain member, we say, in the answer portion, "Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon". That is simply to show that he is in charge of that particular question and of the answer to be given to that question. There is not much in that naming of the member. As it is, the Government chooses to put Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon and other official members as the mouth-piece of the Government. Of course, it clearly follows that the other official members of the Government are entitled to take part in the answering. So there is nothing objectionable in that. I consider it only proper that the official members who are in a position to throw light on the matter must be allowed the right to do so, and it is to the interests of the members of this Council that clear and complete answers are given to the questions put by them—from whomsoever those answers may come.

Another point that I wish to emphasise on this occasion is this : — What a supplementary question is must be clearly borne in mind. A supplementary question, as the rule itself says, is intended to elucidate any matter of fact given in the answer. So that, if questions are put regarding new matters of facts, certainly, they cannot be treated as supplementary questions. Just to illustrate the position, I will take one or two examples, and I will first refer to a question asked in this meeting itself, a question put by Mr. M. K. Raman. It related to something that took place between the Diwan and a journalist, and Mr. Raman wanted to know whether a statement published in the papers regarding this matter is true, and he gave a summary of the statement. The question came to me in my capacity as Diwan, in the usual course of things, and I said the proper answer for this question is : " the statement, as it stands, is not true". At once I noted a supplementary question is likely to be put on this, and then I gave my Secretary

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the necessary materials for the answer to the supplementary question; because, in the usual course of things, supplementary questions will come. "The statement, as it stands, is not true". What is the true statement? He rightly asked the question, and my Secretary rightly answered. That is the sort of supplementary questions we ought to have here and not questions referring to new matters of fact which the Government have not been able to examine and answer with the necessary materials. An answer may contain a reference to a matter of fact. There may be many reasons for that matter of fact. The member chooses to ask: "Will the Government be pleased to say whether this is not the reason for such a course of action pursued by Government"? Well, the reasons may be different. Then the Government Member answers that it is not the reason. At once the member asks what is the true reason? That the Government Member must be able to answer. When he considers the reason for a particular course of action, his mind must be centred on all possible reasons, and whatever is the reason that guided the Government in regard to that particular course of action must be explained to the member of the Council. Well, these facts I wish to emphasise before we take up these questions and answers. I hope these observations will be borne in mind.

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

Sir, before beginning the questions and answers, I beg to say that I am sorry that I did not catch the words that fell from the Chair when I remarked yesterday that the discussion was desultory, and with due deference and regard to the Chair, I beg to withdraw my words. (*Hear, hear.*)

Hostel for female teacher-pupils in the Training School.

SREEMATI T. MADHAVI AMMA.

79. Will the Government be pleased to open a hostel for the benefit of the female teacher-pupils who will have to come and stay here for months together, to undergo training in the Training School at Trichur?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

There are only 12 such pupil-teachers at a time, and the course of training is only 5 months. Conditions, social and economic, make it more advantageous to them to make their own arrangements for the period.

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